

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY WEA/ARN:ARDBY

APPROVED BY NEA:SSOBER

M - LEAGLEBURGER (SUBS)

S/S-P. JOHNSON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 163048 TOSEC 060086

NODIS

CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, LE

SUBJECT: MORGAN ABDUCTION

FOR SECRETARY AND ATHERTON FROM EAGKEBURGER AND SOBER

WE RECEIVED EARLIER TODAY FOLLOWING MESSAGE (TEXT A BELOW) FROM AMBASSADOR GODLEY IN ANOTHER CHANNEL. GIVEN THE TIME FACTOR WE FELT IT NECESSARY TO RESPOND DIRECTLY, AND DID SO WITH TEXT B BELOW.

BEGIN TEXT A:

1. SOURCE CONTACTED EMBASSY OFFICER LATE AFTERNOON 10 JULY, AFTER HAVING BEEN CONTACTED BY BASSAM ABU SHARIF OF PFLP AT 1500 SAME DAY. ABU SHARIF CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN ORDERED MAKE CONTACT WITH SOURCE AS INTERMEDIARY TO AMERICAN EMBASSY.

2. ABU SHARIF SAID THAT COLONEL MORGAN HAD BEEN HELD BY
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THE PFLP/GC AND POPULAR STRUGGLE FRONT. BOTH ORGANIZATIONS

BEING RESPONSIVE NOW TO PFLP ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE SITUATION.

3. PFLP WISHES AMERICAN EMBASSY KNOW THEY WILL NOT CAVE IN TO FATAH SAIQA OR GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON PRESSURE TO GIVE UP MORGAN WITHOUT MEETING OF DEMANDS. PFLP BELIEVES THAT REASON USG WILL NOT MEET DEMANDS IS FEAR OF LOSING FACE BY PUBLICLY DISTRIBUTING GOODS. HENCE PFLP PREPARED SETTLE MATTER SECRETLY AND DIRECTLY WITH USG THROUGH PAYMENT OF DISCREET MONETARY RANSOM. PFLP WOULD PROMISE NOT PUBLICIZE THIS RANSOM OTHER THEN TO ESSENTIAL FEW, BUT WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR RESULTS SHOULD USG REFUSE.

4. SOURCE WAS REQUESTED BY ABU SHARIF REPORT RESULTS OF CONTACT BY MORNING 11 JULY. EMBASSY OFFICER REITERATED THAT USG POLICY NOT PAY RANSOM REMAINS BUT PROMISED CHECK AND RECONTACT SOURCE LATE EVENING 10 JULY.

5. OFFICER REPORTED FOREGOING IMMEDIATELY TO AMBASSADOR. AMBASSADOR CONCURRED IN OFFICER SEEING SOURCE THIS EVENING AND STATED FOLLOWING:

(1) OFFICER HAS REPORTED TO THE EMBASSY.

(2) EMBASSY HAS TAKEN NOTE OF PROPOSALS AND MAY HAVE SOME COMMENT TOMORROW.

(3) EMBASSY REAFFIRMS OFFICER'S STATEMENT RE MONETARY RANSOM.

(4) OFFICER PERSONALLY WONDERS REGARDING USG LOSING FACE WERE IT TO CONTRIBUTE TO HUMANITARIAN EFFORT. (THIS THOUGHT WOULD BE INTERJECTED MORE OR LESS EN PASSANT WITH NO COMMENT BUT IN ORDER TO KEEP THIS DOOR OPEN. IN THIS CONNECTION NOTE WHAT PRIME MINISTER KARAMI SAID ABOUT GOL REBUILDING QUARANTINA AREA BEING REPORTED SEP TEL.)

6. AMBASSADOR REQUESTS FOREGOING BE BROUGHT TO URGENT ATTENTION ASSISTANT SECRETARY STATE ATHERTON WITH REQUEST FOR ANY COMMENTS OR INSTRUCTIONS. AMBASSADOR'S OWN
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VIEW IS THAT THIS CHANNEL MIGHT WELL BE USEFUL AND ASSUMES WASHINGTON WOULD LIKE TO HAVE IT KEPT OPEN. END TEXT A.

BEGIN TEXT B: FOR AMBASSADOR GODLEY FROM SOBER.

7. WE HAVE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED YOUR MESSAGE ABOUT THE APPROACH FROM BASSAM ABU SHARIF. WE AGREE THAT IN COMING PERIOD OF COMPLEX MANEUVERING ABOUT MORGAN'S RELEASE IT

MIGHT BE USEFUL TO KEEP SUCH A CHANNEL OPEN. WE WOULD LIKE TO KEEP IT OPEN WITH AS LITTLE SUBSTANTIVE DIALOGUE AS POSSIBLE. IN PARTICULAR, WE DO NOT WISH TO COMMENT BY MEANS OF THIS CHANNEL ON MATTER OF USG UNWILLINGNESS TO PAY RANSOM. I SUGGEST WE CAN ACCOMPLISH OUR IMMEDIATE PURPOSE BY HAVING YOUR OFFICER SIMPLY SAY, AT THIS STAGE, THAT HE HAS REPORTED TO THE EMBASSY AND THAT THE EMBASSY HAS REPORTED THE CONTACT'S REMARKS AND SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION.

8. REGRET DELAY IN THIS RESPONSE, WHICH REFLECTS DELAY IN YOUR MESSAGE REACHING ME IN ATHERTON'S ABSENCE.
END TEXT B. INGERSOLL

SECRET

NNN

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